

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA



Session 2013

Legislative Fiscal Note

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 164 (First Edition)

SHORT TITLE: Autopsy Fee Increase.

SPONSOR(S): Senator Parmon

FISCAL IMPACT					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> No Estimate Available					
	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18
State Impact					
General Fund Revenues:	628,000	628,000	628,000	628,000	628,000
General Fund Expenditures:	(191,500)	(191,500)	(191,500)	(191,500)	(191,500)
Special Fund Revenues:					
Special Fund Expenditures:					
State Positions:					
NET STATE IMPACT	\$436,500	\$436,500	\$436,500	\$436,500	\$436,500
Local Impact					
Revenues:					
Expenditures:	(1,531,500)	(1,531,500)	(1,531,500)	(1,531,500)	(1,531,500)
NET LOCAL IMPACT	(\$1,531,500)	(\$1,531,500)	(\$1,531,500)	(\$1,531,500)	(\$1,531,500)
 PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) & PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED: Department of Health and Human Services					
 EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013					

BILL SUMMARY: Senate Bill 164 amends G.S. 130A-3889 by increasing the fee for autopsies from one thousand dollars (**\$1,000**) to one thousand and five hundred dollars (**\$1,500**). Responsibility for payment depends on where the death occurs. If the deceased was a resident in the county in which the death occurred, the county is required to pay the autopsy fee. If the deceased was not a resident in the county in which the death occurred, the state is responsible for the fee.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY: According to the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), there were 3,829 medical examiner autopsies performed for calendar year 2011. Assumptions for the number of autopsies to be performed in FY 13-14 are based on historical data and are as follows:

- The total number of projected autopsies to be performed is 3,829 (based on 2011 data);
- 3,063 (80% of the total) autopsies will be paid for by counties to the state or a contractor (of these, 41% will be paid to the state and 59% will be paid to a contractor);
- 383 (10% of the total) autopsies will be paid by the state; and
- 383 (10% of the total) autopsies will be revenue or cost neutral and completed by OCME or a contract vendor.

Net State Impact

The increased general fund revenue generated by the \$500 fee increase for a projected 1,256 autopsies (41% of total paid by counties) is \$628,000 (1,256*\$500).

Increasing the fee also results in increased contractual costs to the state. An estimated 383 autopsies (10% of all autopsies performed) will be paid by the state for contractual services at a projected cost of \$191,500 (383 * \$500).

The net impact to the state is estimated to be \$436,500 on an annual basis (\$628,000 - \$191,500).

Local Impact

Counties pay approximately 80% of all autopsies performed. Assuming that counties would be required to pay for 3,063 autopsies (80% of 3,829), at an additional cost of \$500 each, the estimated costs to counties on an annual basis is \$1,531,500 (3,063*\$500).

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: The Division of Public Health Office of the Chief Medical Examiner projected that approximately 4,000 autopsies would be completed for FY 13-14. Their projection applies a 2% increase in the actual number of reported deaths and autopsies performed in FY 11-12 based on population growth. Complete data for calendar year 2012 is not available at this time due to a lag time of 60-90 days for completed autopsies to be recorded.

Historical data indicates that the overall number of autopsies performed have decreased over time. Based on historical trends, Fiscal Research used actual 2011 data to complete this analysis.

SOURCES OF DATA: Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

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